

King Alfred divided every day into three parts: he allowed eight hours to his devotion, eight to his employment, and eight to his sleep and refection.

3. *This discourse may have this farther fruit,—to beget a dislike, yea, a detestation, of Popery.*—One would wonder that a man in his right senses should ever become a Papist. Their opinions, many of them, are not only unscriptural, but irrational; a man must offer violence to his reason, if he complies with them. I might give many instances; consider these two:—the one is praying *for* the dead; the other is praying *to* the dead. We cannot help the dead by praying *for* them; nor can they hear us when we pray *unto* them. Yea, the Popish religion is not only ridiculous, but idolatrous. There is a five-fold idolatry which we charge upon the church of Rome:—(1.) The worshipping of the cross. (2.) The worshipping of images. (3.) The worshipping of relics. (4.) The worshipping of the elements in the eucharist. (5.) The worshipping of saints and angels. Well may she be called “the whore of Babylon;” yea, that “great whore,” and “the mother of fornications and abominations of the earth!” (Rev. xvii. 1, 5.) The church of the Jews did not forsake the true God altogether; only she would worship him in calves and images: and how often, for this reason, is she called “a whore,” and “an abominable harlot!” The church of Rome is a worse strumpet than ever she was: “a deep ditch” she is; may none amongst us be so far “abhorred of the Lord” as to fall into it! (Prov. xxii. 14.) Dearly beloved countrymen, “flee from idolatry:” (1 Cor. x. 14:) this [is] the “abominable thing that God hateth.” (Jer. xlv. 4.) Popish idolatry is as bad or worse than Paganish. I shall conclude this sermon as the apostle John doth his First Epistle: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1 John v. 21.)

SERMON XI. (XXIV.)

BY THE REV. EDWARD WEST, A. M.

OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

PURGATORY A GROUNDLESS AND DANGEROUS DOCTRINE.

But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.—1 Corinthians iii. 15.

“THIS text,” says Bellarmine, “is one of the most difficult, and yet most profitable, of the whole scripture, in that from hence the Catholics conclude two great points against heretics,—that of purgatory and venial sins.” *

But as hard as the apostle’s text is, this sort of Catholics, in drawing such profound notions from it, seem hard enough for the apostle and his text too; and I am much mistaken, if Paul would not have been alike

* *De Purgatorio*, lib. i. cap. 5.

puzzled to have understood them, as they are at a loss to spell out the meaning of him. It is not every one, nor, may be, any one, of that simple age [who] was aware of such a thing as purgatory or venial sin.

Austin, it seems, was of Bellarmine's mind, as in the same place he quotes him, that this was one of the hard sayings that Peter probably observed in Paul's writings, which we should take heed of wresting to our own destruction. Austin, belike, was wary; but others have ventured to bring it to the rack, and made it speak according to their mind, as reserved and close as it was: they will teach Paul to speak plain, plain Popery, ere they have done. And it is strange to consider how many hard texts even in this obscure matter they pretend to have for them; though, in our controversies with them, we must wholly confine to plain ones. But these magicians, in imitation, as it were, of Moses, that eminent man of God, are altogether for bringing water out of the rocks: if a place be hard in itself, they think it will be too hard for us; and, like a mill-stone, they cast it upon us, urging us to give an evident sense, or admit theirs; and while we are heaving to extricate ourselves, they hope for this advantage over us,—leisurely to retreat from us, and, before we overtake them again, to prepare fresh work of the like kind for us. But it is a dastardly enemy that declines the open field, and fights only from the hedges and holes of rocks; [so] that it is greater difficulty to follow than overcome them. To proceed:

A hard text this is confessed to be; whereon we crave liberty to suspect [that] they may be mistaken, and to suspend our faith till we have made examination.

But, however, a very profitable text it is, if it affords such doctrines as fore-mentioned, worth many thousands by the year, I will warrant you; for, however some dissemble the matter, on these suppositions it is, that Masses and indulgences go off at the rate they do. If souls went forthwith to heaven, they would not care a pin for them; if forthwith to hell, they would despair of benefit by them. But the opinion of purgatory makes them precious; especially since, as is said, that "souls there are defective in merit, and cannot further merit in that state themselves:"* they must needs, on this supposition, reckon themselves more beholden to them that will impart of their oil to them; and, in hope to partake of their spirituals, can do no less than leave them a good share of their temporals.

And, to make them the more willingly give down their milk, Aquinas tells them, that the priests' prayers, Masses, &c., profit them when dead, by virtue of what they did themselves while alive.† You may guess his meaning,—the priest should profit him when dead, as his purse had profited the priest when alive. And elsewhere he adds, that prayers are more effectual for us if we are particularly remembered, than if we are more generally recommended.‡ Well, it is but meet that the priest should be particularly remembered that particularly remembers us, and that something should be done to rub up his memory of us in particular when we are gone. If "gain be godliness," (1 Tim. vi. 5,) as some have supposed, certainly this doctrine of purgatory is a prime article of

* BELLARMINUS *De Purgatorio*, lib. II. cap. 2.
lib. I. art. 2.

† *Ibid.* art. 12.

† AQUINATIS *Suppl.* quæst.

religion; for all experience as well as reason teaches us, that it is a very profitable doctrine.

The saints in heaven are high and stout, they will give us nothing. The damned in hell are a poor or surly rout. The one does not need our prayers, the other does despise our prayers. We must threaten men with this prison of purgatory, or they will never pay their debts to us; but, rather than lie and rot there, we may easily conclude, [that] they will compound with us here.

But, for clearer procedure, it will be necessary to show,

I. *What the Papists do mean by purgatory.*

II. *Whether any such thing is probably meant in this text.*

III. *Whether the word of God does anywhere give ground for such a conceit, with that cogency especially as that we should receive it for an article of faith.*

IV. *I shall briefly consider (as they deserve) their supplementary arguments.*

V. *Show what ground there is from scripture to disbelieve any such thing.*

VI. *What evil consequences there are of the receipt of it.*

VII. And lastly. *I shall give you the genuine sense of the place, and improve it.*

I. *What do the Papists mean by their purgatory?*

PROTESTANTS' PURGATORY.

ANSWER. That there is a purgation of our souls preparatory to their immediate enjoyment of God, we freely grant to them, and that both in respect of guilt and filth; and many ways we assign whereby this is done. Eminently, by the blood and Spirit of Christ: hereby filthy wretches indeed are said to be cleansed. (1 Cor. vi. 9—11.) Christ was thought to have done this work effectually, what one way, and what another; and he reckoned so himself, as appears by his sitting down. (Heb. i. 3.) His coming therefore was foretold as with fire and water, that are the great cleansers amongst us. (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) Moreover, as instruments that are effectual through him, this purging work is ascribed sometimes and in some part to the word: "Purify them by thy truth: thy word is truth;" (John xv. 3; xvii. 17;) at other times and in another respect to faith: "Purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts xv. 9.) Sometimes to afflictions; whence is that comparison, "We went through fire and water;" (Psalm lxxvi. 12;) so afflictions are called, as being frequently used for our purging and cleansing. Such a purgatory we Protestants allow of; and are free to tell, that the place of it is this world; and that the remainder of sin, which sticks to the best of us while alive, is concluded in death; whereby the body is incapacitated, and all its moral as well as vital actions terminated; and wherein the soul is perfected by the immediate vision of God and Christ, into whose image it is hereby changed, according to present experience, (2 Cor. iii. 18,) and after-hope: "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

But this will not serve our adversaries' turn. Let us then hear and examine their notion of purgatory.

Bellarmino tells us in general, that "it is a certain place, wherein, as in a prison, souls are purged after this life that were not fully purged here, to the intent they may enter pure into heaven."*

Let us inquire of him a little more particularly,

1. *Where this place is.*

He tells us, that "the church has not defined it, and that there are eight several opinions about it."† Fancy, you see, is fruitful: here is even every one his tale. But such variety cannot but much please our company, yea, and the customers too; for if they like not one, they may take the other. But the generality of the Schoolmen will have it "in the bowels of the earth, on the borders of hell."‡ But, be it where it will, I hope I shall never come thither; and, as I suppose, they that thus inform us had not been there. But all things are within the ken of the sagacious Schoolmen.

2. *Who are to go thither?*

Eight opinions also are reckoned up about this. Some thought, all men, good and bad; others, both men and devils; others, all and only Catholics. (Alas! poor heretics!) And so he goes on to the full number, charging one or more fathers with each of them. And yet all but the last were out, as he concludes in the close of that chapter.§ Whereby I understand, that the fathers are of no authority, except when they speak for one; and so we as well as they will be content to be determined by them.

But what at length is the true opinion?

That purgatory is only for them that die with venial sins, or that depart *cum reatu pœnæ, culpæ jam remissis*.|| This is crabbed Latin; you will pardon me, if I cannot straight English it. I was almost stumbled before at venial sins; but my author helps me to understand what he means by them: "Such as are worthy only of a temporal punishment."¶ These are petty kind of sins. But that notion I pass over, as likely to be examined by a much better hand. That which does most puzzle me is this *reatus pœnæ*, this "guilt of punishment that remains when the fault is pardoned;" and this difficulty I think not easy to get over. For what is guilt without respect to a fault? And what place has punishment after pardon?

But this is the best account we are likely to have of what is to be purged in this purgatory,—some pitiful little sins, or such that were pardoned before. In effect, I perceive, that persons that go thither need only to be a little polished over. They are detained in that prison for some few farthings that Christ, when he paid their debts, left on the score; (alas for him, he was so poor!) and for this they and their friends must make a purse, and so they may go out. If they have good helpers, that will go pilgrimages, say Masses, or procure indulgences for them, they may go out so much the sooner; but if all lies upon themselves, they must tarry longer, and thank themselves that by their bounty they obliged nobody [whom they] left behind them to merit a speedy release for them. It is likely by this to go very hard with poor folks and churls. And, to fright persons into a readier compliance with them, the grievous-

* *De Purgatorio*, lib. II. cap. 6. † *Idem, ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.* cap. 1.
|| *Ibid.* ¶ *Ibid.* lib. I. cap. 11.

ness of the punishment is set before them : fire is the best that can be expected by them ; and therein they may lie frying till the resurrection, in some thousand years scarcely making an expiation.

And it is specially remarkable, that persons are not judged thither that the fumes of sin may be wasted, nor for any evil habits, that they may be amended ; but purely that their lesser debts (that Christ, it seems, had forgot, or was not able to discharge) may by their personal punishment, and their living friends' piety and prayers, be fully paid.*

And thus much for their notion of purgatory, as to its place and purposes.

II. The second thing to be inquired into is, *whether it is this Popish purgatory that Paul means by "the fire" in our text.*

For my part, I can hardly think it is, in that I find Paul such a stranger in all his writings to their notion of it ; venial sins, punishment after pardon, human satisfactions, by translation of one's works to another, (when indeed no one has half enough for himself,) prayers for the dead, and the like, which are perquisites of their purgatory, he, good man, seeming utterly unacquainted with.

But he talks of "fire ;" and there is fire in their purgatory. What then ? Are there not many notions of fire in scripture ? Is not the word, the Spirit, afflictions, frequently set out by it ? This they will not deny. There is no necessity then of interpreting this fire by that of purgatory ; yea, there is a great probability of the contrary :—

1. In that it is certain, that the whole of Paul's discourse here is a metaphor ; and it is likely that it is metaphorical fire that this metaphorical stubble and metaphorical builder are in danger of.

2. Whereas "fire" is twice used before, it is evident, that it is not there to be understood of purgatory-fire ; and must be so confessed by themselves. And therefore it is unlikely, having other fire at hand, he should run to purgatory to fetch fire ; unless he had been a disciple of Ignatius, that can never kindle fire enough. For instance : of "the fire" in verse 13 it is said, that "it shall try every man's work ;" whereas Papists will yield, [that] purgatory is not for trial of men's works ; they are tried and found slight before any one comes thither. Nor, again, is purgatory, according to them, for every one ; the very good and the very bad come not thither : therefore this cannot be understood of purgatory-fire. Again : the fire which in the beginning of our text is said to burn some men's works, is the same with the fire that tried them ; for therein some are expressly said to "abide," and others to "burn." Moreover, their purgatory-fire acts on persons, this on works ; and such works as we cannot imagine how a material fire should touch, unless it can, as they say, *comedere secundas notiones* ["eat up second notions"] ; for these works, as is clear by the context, are corrupt doctrines. And what reason is there in this last clause to alter the notion of fire ? One would easily conceive, that the fire which the builder escaped was the same with that which burnt his works ; for we hear of no other that he was in danger by. And if any fire here spoken of might be supposed to be understood metaphorically, much more this last, in that it is brought in with such signal notes of comparison : *Οὕτω ὡς*, "Yet so as by fire."

* BELLARMINUS *De Purgatorio*, lib. ii. cap. 9.

You see, then, that this text, that looks fairest for their purpose of any in all the book of God, is so far from a cogency, that there is not so much as a probability, of its meaning any such thing. Hitherto then we must be excused from receiving this doctrine as an article of faith to be believed on pain of damnation, as Bellarmine urges it ; * for we see no tolerable grounds to take it up for an opinion. There is such a deal of force to be used to these words to make them speak to the Popish purpose, that we may perceive them loath to own it ; and, for my part, if they speak no plainer, they shall stand-by awhile, till we have examined other witnesses.

III. Let us inquire *whether the word of God does any where give ground for such a conceit, with that cogency especially as that we should receive it as an article of faith.*

The principal texts [which] they use, either directly or indirectly, as tending to this purpose, I shall briefly examine.

The first I am sure [that] they can think on (and that, you will say, is far-fetched) is Gen. iii. 24, where God is said to have placed “a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life.” This flaming sword, say some of them, was a witness to sinners, that they must pass through purgatory into Paradise.

ANSWER. If we mind the scope of the words, that text rather seems to have signified, that by the old way of works there was no entrance into Paradise ; for this sword is said to be “placed to keep the way of the tree of life, lest man by eating of it should live for ever ;” and so makes rather against purgatory, that seems a part of an apurtenance of the old way of works. But a flaming sword seemed a good weapon, and they were willing to take it into their hands : and, indeed, their great argument for all their peculiar articles has been fire and sword.

But, to leave this sword in the cherubims’ hand, let us make a leap to 2 Macc. xii., which is the alone place Bellarmine pitches upon in the Old Testament, as convincing in this matter. Of all others he speaks very slightly, however fathers have made use of them, as if they were such *quæ solùm probabiliter suadent* ; † and hereabout I shall have no controversy with him ; I think he has given them their full due.

The place, then, to be considered is 2 Macc. xii. 43—45, where Judas Maccabeus, as Bellarmine quotes him, ‡ is said to have “gathered twelve thousand drachms of silver, and sent them to Jerusalem, to be laid out in sacrifices for the dead ;” and the gloss of the author he adds,—“That it is a pious and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.” Whence he infers, 1. That the dead may be loosed from their sins ; and therefore there is a purgatory. 2. That prayers and sacrifices do profit the dead. Three other inferences he draws, the last of which is, that purgatory and prayers for the dead must needs be an article of faith.

This text is their Hercules’s club, that knocks all dead. Other texts render it but probable,—this, it seems, makes it clear, and necessary to be believed,—that there is a purgatory.

ANSWER. To this we reply a great many things.

* *De Purgatorio*, lib. 1. cap. 15.

† *De Purg.* lib. 1. cap. 3. “Which only persuade

with probability.”—EDIT.

‡ *Ibid.*

1. As to the matter of fact that is recorded of Judas,—that he did raise a certain sum of money, (though not twelve thousand, but two thousand, drachms, as the Greek copy reads it,) and sent it to Jerusalem to buy sacrifices,—I will not dispute against it; he might do it, probably did it, and in his circumstances had good reason for it. But that he did it *pro mortuis*, or “for the relief of the dead,” that is Bellarmine’s forgery. The text says only, *pro peccato*, “for the sin;” namely, lest, being a notorious sin, the living should be plagued for it; and that this was his case appears by verse 42: “They prayed that the sin might be blotted out, and Judas exhorted the multitude to keep themselves” *αναμαρτητους*, “free from the sin, seeing the punishment of them that had committed it.” And this is an interpretation of his fact that agrees to the letter of the text, and the analogy of faith.

2. As for the author’s gloss,—what a piece of piety it is to pray for the dead,—we are not much concerned in it; for whoever was the author of it, whether Jason or his abbreviator, (as may seem, 2 Macc. ii. 23, &c.,) and however good a historian he was, we own him for no prophet. Nor did the church of the Jews ever look upon his writings as canonical, as Papists themselves confess: though Bellarmine says the Christian church did, he gives slender proof of it.* Austin indeed says, “It was received of the church not unprofitably, provided it was soberly read;” where he seems to caution against some dangerous passages in it, by which unwary readers might be prejudiced, as much as the more wise profited. But the author himself acquits us from any veneration of him, by his courting his readers’ favour, ever and anon, and desiring their pardon, at least, if any thing had been said amiss; (2 Macc. ii. 26;) which are condescensions below the Spirit of God, or any author inspired by it.

3. If this author had been good, and the Jews there had prayed for the dead, the Papists’ inference of purgatory, according to their own principles, is weak; for it seems also by their faith, that people may be prayed out of hell. Though this they will not grant for ordinary, lest it should spoil their purgatory; yet two instances they very confidently give of it, which speaks a possibility: one of Trajan, a bloody persecutor, upon the prayers of Gregory, of which, Damascene says, the whole east and west were witnesses; and the other of Falconilla, a Pagan woman, by the prayers of St. Thecla. And if there was need of any more such stuff, the scull of a certain gentile priest told Macarius, that its owner was delivered out of hell by his prayers. And here is as good authority as our adversaries will bring, by-and-by, for their purgatory. Though, I must confess, these instances, as going against the hair, do not overcleverly go down; for though they hugely advance prayer, they quite raze purgatory. To make up therefore differences between the combatants on each party, Aquinas tells us,† (and he seems to moderate well, like an Angelical Doctor,) that “they were not finally sent to hell, but according to their present merit; and that probably they were first raised to life, and so repented, ere they were translated to heaven; and also that this was not by common law, but special privilege,” an act as it were of Chancery. But, however it was, if one late penitent, though but one, is thought sufficient to prevent every one’s despair, two such instances

* BELLARMINUS *De Purgatorio*, lib. I. cap. 3. † *Suppl. quest. lxxi. art. 5.*

of damned persons recovered to grace are ground enough to encourage prayer for all the rest.

And if fathers would make these fantastic arguments authentic, it were easy to give many that speak probably, as if they half believed such a thing as the possibility of a deliverance from hell. Origen goes a great way beyond us. Let us hear what Austin says, that they would make their great man for purgatory. Aquinas denies not but that it was his saying, that suffrages did "profit the dead either for a full absolution, or more tolerable damnation;" * both which must refer to their state in hell. There is no proper damnation in purgatory, and remission is said to be granted before they go to purgatory; only an imaginary guilt remains there, that may be properly enough purged in an imaginary place, by an imaginary fire, such as (for aught we yet hear of purgatory) that seems to be.

And thus I conceive the force of this text is fully enervated, the fact being shown to have been misconstrued, the gloss not duly authorized, and the inference not firmly grounded.

We must now pass into the New Testament; and there the most likely text seems to be Matt. xii. 31, 32, where it is said of the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," that "it shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come:" hence conclude they, that some sins are forgiven in the other world; and therefore [there is] a purgatory.

ANSWER 1. I deny the consequence; for, according to their opinion, as you have fore-heard, purgatory is for persons whose sins are already forgiven.

2. The original is, *Ουτε εν τούτω τῷ αἰωνί, ουτε εν τῷ μελλόντι*: "Neither in this age, nor in the age to come;" where the present age may signify the Judaic state, wherein grace was straiter; and the future, that of Christ's kingdom, wherein it was expected larger. Thus "age to come" is often taken, as probably, Heb. vi. 5; and, according to some readings, in Isai. ix. 6, Christ is called, instead of "everlasting Father," *ὁ Πατήρ του μελλοντος αιωνος*, "the Father of the age to come." But if this will not be admitted,

3. Let Matthew interpret himself by what he says in the former verse, where he tells them, without this exaggeration, that it "shall not be forgiven;" and, to omit fathers, let me only refer them to his brother Mark, in Mark iii. 29, where it is simply rendered, that "he hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of," or obnoxious to, "eternal damnation," *ουκ εχει αφεσιν εις τον αιωνα*. Both the former ages are here wrapped up in the one of eternity, as it were to correct the Popish nicety.

Another text [which] they make use of is Matt. v. 25, 26, where we are advised to "agree with our adversary quickly while in the way; lest the adversary deliver us to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and we be cast into prison; for we shall by no means come out thence, till we have paid the utmost farthing." Here also Papists do see venial sins in the "farthings," human satisfactions in the "pay," purgatory in the "prison." But that no such things can with any congruity be hence inferred, you may observe,

1. That it is questionable whether this is any parable, or looks any

* *Suppl. quest. lxxi. art. 5.*

further than the civil differences between us and our brother ; which we should speedily take up among ourselves by the common rule of equity, and not suffer needlessly to come before the forensic judges where we may expect utmost severity. The context inclines to this, and so this text is expounded by Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Jerome.

2. If a parable, on that account, by the common rule of the Schools, it is not argumentative, especially in an article of faith.

3. Its scope must be intended, and not every particular word racked ; and that seems to be only this,—that we should make our peace with God in this life, and as soon as we can, in that here we may expect mercy ; whereas, if we put off matters till we come before God's tribunal, we shall be dealt with in all severity : God will not abate us an ace then, he will exact the utmost farthing ; he will not then hear of remission, or composition ;—that we are likely to go to eternal perdition : “ the prison ” is *hell* ; and there is no relief from the “ until ; ” for the impossibility of the condition makes that but a bare supposition, and it is all one with “ never. ” As to which resolution of the matter, we have abettors, some of the most considerable of the Popish doctors : *MALDONATUS in locum ; TOLETUS in Lucam xii. ; JANSENIUS, Concord. Evang.*

A further text [which] Bellarmine lays great stress upon is 1 Cor. xv. 29 : “ What shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? why are they then baptized for the dead ? ” This, we must confess, is a difficult place indeed, and has wrested many great wits. But Papists think, that, by way of requital, as it were, they may wrest it ; and by “ baptism ” understand all their voluntary services for the dead, supposing hence that they may thereby profit the dead ; and consequently, that there is a purgatory, wherein they are detained till by these means they are relieved.

ANSWER 1. Their notion of baptism is perfectly new-coined ; for though afflictions, which in the Old Testament are frequently set out by “ waters, ” are sometimes in the gospel couched under this name of “ baptism, ” (Matt. xx. 22, 23,) yet prayers, alms, sacrifices, and such-like voluntary services, were never so expressed, nor with any pretence of reason can be thereby understood.

2. If this was granted, purgatory could not be hence inferred ; for this baptism, whatever it was, referred to the resurrection of the body, as a typical representation of that, whereon it is made use of for confirmation of the faith of that ; whereas purgatory, according to them, is only for the relief of the soul : [so] that were we wholly at a loss for the positive meaning of the text, or should we be out in our guess at it, they could reasonably take no advantage of it ; for, to whatever it serves, it serves not to their purpose ; the body and its resurrection, and not the soul and its purgation, being concerned in it, as by the context clearly appears.

But, however, to take occasion to explain that very puzzling text,

1. Some refer it to a corrupt custom, taken up by the Corinthians and Marcionites, of baptizing a living person instead of his friend who was dead ; which Paul makes use of to their conviction, without his own approbation. Let this have what weight it will with others, I must profess, it little sways with me.

2. Others think [that] this baptism refers to the washings that were used about the dead, which showed hope of their resurrection ; otherwise why should they make such ado about the bodies of them ? (Of this custom we hear something in Acts ix. 37.) But then we must take baptism here in the middle voice, and read the text, "Why do they baptize, or use washings about, the dead ?" Let this notion go as far as it will, I know no hurt in it.

3. According to others, "baptism" may be here taken for sufferings ; and so this clause may be much the same with what follows in the next verse : "Why stand we in jeopardy ?" "Why do we thus expose our bodies, if they shall never be restored to life ?"

4. Let me add a fourth notion, that takes "baptism" in a literal sense, and supposes an ordinary figure of one number for another, where there is speech of the dead ; and that the meaning is, "If the dead rise not, what shall become of us and our baptism, that are baptized into Jesus who is dead ? for 'if the dead rise not,' as he there says, (verse 16,) "Christ is not risen,' and consequently our gospel and hope are vain." And thus, by a small dispensation with grammar, which the apostle does not exactly tie himself to, we have a plain and safe meaning of this difficult text. However, in regard of its difficulty, I should judge it very improper to make it the basis of any new uncouth article ; I would rather use it for confirmation of one that was otherwise sufficiently bottomed, and would keep to the apostle's scope in the application of it, till I had its fuller and surer interpretation ; and that certainly is, to confirm us, from something in use among us, of the future resurrection.

The last text I shall mention, that is of any probability, is 1 Peter iii. 19, where Christ is said by the Spirit to have gone "and preached to the spirits in prison, that were sometime disobedient in the days of Noah." This "prison," they dream, is purgatory ; and it seems that there is preaching in it too : but to what purpose, if there be no repenting or changing of estate, as every where Papists confess there is not in purgatory ? And, I suppose, while the scripture speaks of the so great wickedness of the world before the flood, they will not think that the men of that age went generally to purgatory ; and therefore Christ might have had but few auditors, if he had gone thither to have preached to them.

The plain meaning of that text is, that Christ by his Spirit in Noah did once preach unto that generation, whose spirits are now in hold as criminals for their then disobedience : of which preaching of Noah, and the strivings of this Spirit, we hear in 2 Peter ii. 5 ; Gen. vi. 3. But to suppose Christ's personal going into those dark regions to preach the gospel to spirits so long departed, is a ridiculous fable, and destructive even of their own notion of purgatory ; that reckons the present life the way, the race, and that hereafter is no opportunity to obtain grace, but satisfy justice.

Such shifts, then, *they* are put to, *that*, right or wrong, will take upon them to defend a bad cause ; and yet as little as these scriptures [which] I have quoted make for them, and as much as in truth they make against them, they are their chief weapons. If I should mention several others, I could propose no other design than to shame them ; but, it may be, they will say, Do that, if I can. I shall, however, forbear, in that it

may be a harder task than I am aware ; for some folks have whores' foreheads, and will not be ashamed.

IV. *Let us now briefly consider their supplementary arguments ; which ordinarily are from these heads : 1. Reasons. 2. Fathers. 3. Councils. 4. Consent of nations. 5. Revelations.*

REASONS.

I. Let us hear their strong *reasons* for a purgatory. And the first I find to be this :—

REASON I. In that some sins are venial, and only worthy of a temporal punishment, and it is possible [that] a man may depart out of this life only with these ; therefore it is necessary that they should be purged and expiated in another.

REASON II. When sinners are reconciled to God, the whole temporal punishment is not always remitted with the sin : and a man may die before he has discharged it ; and therefore in the other world he must make it up. And hereon a purgatory seems necessary.

And these are all the reasons [which] Bellarmine gives us.* But add what I shall consider under the following distinct heads, and by this you will see upon what lame legs this great doctrine stands. For,

(1.) We utterly deny any sin to be in this sense venial, having learned out of the scriptures, that “the wages of sin,” one as well as another, “is death.” (Rom. vi. 23.)

(2.) Though we allow of fatherly chastisements that God lays on his people here for others' example and their own amendment, as a fruit of love rather than justice, (Rev. iii. 19.) we understand nothing of a proper punishment by way of personal satisfaction that is required of us when God has pardoned us ; having learned, that God does “abundantly pardon” where he pardons ; (Isai. lv. 7 ;) and having confidence that Christ has fully satisfied where he has undertaken to satisfy, “by one sacrifice perfecting for ever them that are sanctified ;” (Heb. x. 14 ;) and that “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.” (Rom. viii. 1.) And we reckon it absurd that we should be loosed in respect of our greater sins by the sufferings of another, and held for our slighter peccadillos to make satisfaction in our own persons. We cannot conceive why Christ, that paid the pounds, should grudge the pence ; [that] after he has paid our debt, he should suffer us to lie for fees. If there was a meetness [that] we should smart for any of our sins, one would expect it rather for our great ones ; but the goodness that passes over them will not disparage itself to take notice of little things ; but we assure ourselves [that] where it sets on forgiveness, it will make clear work, “forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,” that all glory may be to God. (Exod. xxxiv. 7.)

(3.) We suppose [that] the wise providence of God does so far subserve his covenant, that no surprisal shall happen to them interested in it, to cut them short of the full benefit of it ; and that God will continue them in this life, till he has fitted them for a better : otherwise David was out in his notion of God's covenant, that reckoned it “ordered in all things, and sure ;” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5 ;) and we are abused in what we hear of his

* BELLARMINUS *De Purg.* lib. 1. cap. 11.

exact and accurate providence. (Matt. x. 29, 30.) If this be all Bellarmine's reason for a purgatory,—to catch those of God's people that shall drop out of his providential hand, that they may not quite fall into hell,—he may content himself [that] God is not so careless of his own matters or people as he would make him. His fruit drops not off the tree of its own accord, that there should be danger of its falling before it was ripe ; but he gathers it in convenient season, so that there is no need of a purgatory, wherein it should lie mellowing.

You see, by what we have replied in these three particulars, how straitened they are for reasons, that they must extenuate the desert of sin, lessen the merit of Christ, and reflect on the wise providence of God, to have any show of one. And I must profess, had I hesitated at the doctrine of purgatory before, such reasons as these for it would have confirmed me in the disbelief of it. It is time to desert that faith where I cannot be a believer without being also a blasphemer.

FATHERS.

2. Their second argument is from *fathers* ; as to which I briefly reply, that, upon examination, I find some false fathers imposed, others falsely quoted, others falsely applied to what they never intended ; as was easy to give instances, were they not from other hands so abundantly ministered. And further I find, (as is said of a certain people,) that they sell powder to friend and foe ; whereby a great noise is made, and a great smoke is raised, in which a man may soon lose his religion : but I pity the poor man that is to seek it among them.

And herein I acknowledge God very good to his church, discouraging her by this human uncertainty from pinning her faith on man, and directing her to his infallible word, on which alone she can safely and reasonably settle. And such an observation, I conceive, put the spouse on that particular inquisition after Christ himself : “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside” (or “sitteth veiled,” after the manner of harlots) “by the flocks of thy companions?” (Canticles i. 7.) That church that would keep itself chaste must be aware of wanton shepherds, how it sits down by them, or dallies with them, and keep close to Christ, that it may be delivered from them : and that church or society of men is a strumpet, that draws a veil over its own eyes, not caring to distinguish between Christ and his companions ; that listens to every one's voice, and receives every one's embrace. Christ's “sheep know his voice, and follow him. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers.” (John x. 4, 5.) And a stranger he is, and a strange voice he has, that speaks not according to what is written ; and so he should be looked on by you. (Gal. i. 6—9.)

I speak not this to disparage the true fathers ; but I fear, as by the body of Moses (if he could have found it, or Michael would have delivered it, Deut. xxxiv. 6 ; Jude 9) the devil had a design of imposing upon Israel, so, under the name of divers upright and eminent fathers, the Deceiver of the Nations and his prophets have obtruded upon the world many gross superstitions and corrupt doctrines. Whereof it is

but needful [that] we should take caution ; especially if there appears to us the ghost of an ancient father, long dead, and hid from former ages, and raised by we know not what enchantments of later impostors, speaking things dissonant to the analogy of faith ; as is the case in respect of divers of those fathers [whom] the Papists urge us with, as Dionysius, Clemens, Ephrem, &c. But universally it is a good rule, to “beware of men,” (Matt. x. 17,) and have your eye to the word of God, which is able to instruct you to “every good work.” (2 Tim. iii. 17.)

COUNCILS.

3. They pretend also *councils* in the case.

To which pretence I reply, that we find none of antiquity or universality to move us in the matter ; nor, for aught [that] appears, was it ever industriously handled till the council of Florence, not much upward of two hundred years [since], as Bellarmine himself seems to grant :* on occasion of pope John XXII. being impeached of heresy, as believing the sleep of all souls till the general resurrection, he plainly tells us, that he believed so, while it was lawful for him so to do without danger of heresy ; for the church had not then defined what in that case was to be believed. And consequently the division of our dead saints into those in heaven, and [those] in purgatory, even according to him, was not determined in any antecedent council ; and we are not moved by an article of faith that is so novel. Our Creed was completed one thousand six hundred years since, whereas it seems this great article of purgatory is not of three hundred years' standing ; for before then we might safely have believed all souls quiet enough. And the truth of it is, this opinion did prevail, as an opinion, among several of the ancients, and was probably the true foundation of those footsteps of superstition that we find among them in reference to the dead ; yet though this foundation by the Popish church itself is razed, the Popish purgatory, upon the superstructure of straw that the ancients laid thereon, is principally founded, as in all their treatises of that subject may be observed.

CONSENT OF NATIONS.

4. The fourth argument is from general *consent of nations* ; and here Bellarmine reckons up the Hebrews, the Mahometans, and the Heathens.†

I had expected [that] he would have brought in the Greeks also ; and it may be supposed he took that for granted, in regard he had quoted so many of the Greek fathers in the former chapter, that, for aught I perceive, spake good Greek, if that would end a controversy : or, “However,” say our neoterics, “the Greeks differed in this point heretofore, they agreed to it in the council of Florence ; where the Greek emperor Palæologus, and Joseph, the patriarch of Constantinople, with divers Greek bishops, were present, and gave their consent in the disputed point of purgatory.”

In answer to this, I reply only two things ; for I am loath to lose the Greeks, I must confess, being so considerable a body of Christians :—

(1.) That Bellarmine does yield the Greeks to be suspected, at least, of heresy in this business, and the Armenians also, and brings in

* BELLARMINUS *De Rom. Pont.* lib. iv. cap. 14.

† *De Purg.* lib. iv. cap. 11.

Aquinas as of his mind ; and yet further feeds his suspicion, from the proceeding of the very council of Florence ; * whence later writers would persuade us of their being right for the business.

(2.) Whatever was done by the Greek bishops in that synod, the rest of the Greek churches disowned when they came home, and interdicted them all Christian burial for their pains. And a fatal council this is noted every way to have been to the Greeks ; † for in it the patriarch dies ; presently after, the emperor ; and, within fourteen years after, Constantinople is taken by the Turks, the emperor's brother slain, the Greek empire dissolved, the Christians of those parts enslaved, and given thereby to find their purgatory in this world.

As to their pretension to the Hebrews as being for purgatory, they have showed their proof, in 2 Macc. xii. 43—45 ; and it is needless further to disprove them.

For the Heathen, especially the poets, I think we may grant several of them as abettors, and I suppose fathers, of this profound notion.

As to the Mahometans also I will not much dispute ; nor wonder if I find purgatory in their Alcoran, since Sergius the monk was one of the authors of it.

And, on re-collection of the whole, this specious argument of consent of nations results in the sweet harmony of Turks, Papists, and heathen poets ; and likely enough, if we would trace them, they agree in more points than this. And herein let them glory on, while we comfort ourselves in our redemption "from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers." (1 Peter i. 18.)

APPARITIONS.

5. The fifth and last argument is from *apparitions* ; and here I might tell you abundance of pretty stories, were it worth the while. But as to these, I must frankly say, that if they had been true, (whereas the generality of them smell of fiction,) and if there had been ten where we hear only of one, it would have made this doctrine more suspicious. It seems hereby the interest of hell to promote such fancies. These phantasms, ghosts, or what else you will call them, were never, as I find, allowed preachers, nor do any of the monks record that they showed them their orders ; and it is observable [that] they came with different stories, some describing a Popish purgatory, and others, as it were a Turkish paradise : but God has directed us to "Moses and the prophets," (Luke xvi. 29.) and upbraided inquiring "for the living of the dead." (Isai. viii. 19.) So that I look on all of this nature as diabolical delusion, and the heeding of such things as a great declension from God, and the very precipice unto all superstition. And now let Papists further brag, that they have not only Turks and Heathens, but even hell itself, of their mind.

SCRIPTURE-GROUNDS TO BELIEVE NO PURGATORY.

But we have followed them too far in their fopperies, let us briefly inquire,

V. *What ground there is from scripture to disbelieve any such thing as purgatory.*

* *Ibid.* lib. i. cap. 2.

† SIMPSON.

1. The scriptures mention only a two-fold state of persons departed this life,—placing some in heaven, and others in hell; and accordingly allure the good by the hopes of one, and fright the bad with the threats of the other; never setting before us for encouragement or discouragement any third state after this life: “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 16.) And lest sophisters should except, that he says not he shall presently be saved, but by the intermediation of purgatory, we find it elsewhere, even in words of the present, expressed: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;” and, on the contrary, “the wrath of God” is said “to abide on him” that doth not. (John iii. 36.)

2. The scripture makes only a two-fold division of saints, in respect of place, dividing the whole family into them on earth, and them in heaven. (Eph. iii. 15.) Therefore none that are under his fatherly love and care can well be supposed elsewhere.

3. The saints, that undoubtedly knew the mind of God, have not only been assured themselves, but have assured one another, that on their bodily death they should go forthwith to bliss; whence is that, “To me to die is gain;” “I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.” (Phil. i. 21, 23.) And again: “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. v. 8.) So the converted thief expected, and was assured, when he had no time to make personal satisfaction, as the Papists require: “This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” (Luke xxiii. 43.) not purgatory: there, to be sure, Christ is not; and where he is, there, you may all along observe, they expect to be, and that immediately. Lazarus is no sooner dead, but he is seen in Abraham’s bosom, which surely was a place of rest. And in general, they are pronounced “blessed that die in the Lord,” as “resting from their labours.” (Rev. xiv. 13.) And lest this should be restrained to martyrs, and the former to eminent saints, (such as the thief, for instance,) we hear it, that good men, without exception, are taken hence in pity, that they may be freed from present evil, and go to rest after their hard labours; (Isai. lviii. 1, 2;) which certainly implies not their being cast into purgatory-fire, if it be so fierce especially as it is painted.

4. The scripture speaks of Christ as having fully satisfied, and of believers as being entirely justified, and thereon at peace with God, and as rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, looking on all the afflictions that remain as flea-bitings, little momentary things; which they would not certainly have spoke so contemptibly of, if they had thought [that] they might have lain some thousand years in purgatory-flames. No; they reckoned only of “the sufferings of the present time,” (Rom. viii. 18,) not dreaming of any afterwards; but on their “justification by faith,” concluded of their “peace with God.” And again: they are spoken of “joying in God through their Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they had now received the atonement.” (Rom. v. 1, 11.) They did certainly expect that God had no after-reckoning for them; their smiling look on God spoke evidently [that] they thought not of further severities from him.

5. The scripture speaks of God as thoroughly pardoning upon our

repenting: "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." (Ezek. xviii. 22.) "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more:" (Heb. viii. 12:) whereas he would remember them with a witness, if he should throw them into that dark prison till they had made in their own persons an expiation by such sufferings as are not to be paralleled on earth.

6. The scripture speaks expressly of this life as our way and only working-time, and that in "the night" of death "no man can work;" (John ix. 4:) and moreover, "that every man shall receive according to what he hath done in the body:" (2 Cor. v. 10:) "he," and not another; "done," and not suffered; "in the body," while soul and body were together, and not what the soul should do apart. And, indeed, what is done out of the body is not the act of the man, and so can tend neither to his good nor hurt; and consequently, what the soul is supposed to suffer in purgatory can no ways be imagined expiatory for what was done in the body; as Papists themselves in effect grant, in denying that *there* is any merit, and thereby yield their purgatory a fantastical and insignificant thing.

7. And lastly. If there was such a distress incident to the souls of believers after death, no doubt but God would have appointed something for their relief; but no sacrifice do we find under the law that refers to the dead, nor any one office appointed or performed by any ancient saint under that dispensation that can probably be applied to such a purpose; whereas every minute case was respected, and from all uncleanness care was taken [that] we might be purged; but the dead God seems willing should be deserted, not only by his passing them over, but charging us, as it were, to make as little ado as may be about them. We defile ourselves by touching of them, and are discharged those penances that natural superstition had engaged the nations in in reference to them: "Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead;" (Deut. xiv. 1;) and to the same purpose more fully, in Lev. xix. 27, 28. This care we find taken to prevent much ceremony, such especially as carried a show of severity, and seemed likeliest, according to the Popish notion, to have profited the dead; but nothing in its stead does appear instituted for their relief; which silence speaks, that persons removed into the other world are either happy above our help, or miserable beyond it. The seventh day under the law was the day that perfected their cleansing, and what was not clean then, we hear not when it should be clean; (Num. xix. 12;) by which probably was typified, that the time of life was the time of hope, and what was neglected in that term was not to be repaired unto eternity.

Thus much for scriptural arguments against this doctrine of purgatory.

CAVIL.

But I foresee a shrewd cavil, which yet I am ashamed to concern myself about, it has so little in it; but on the same account I might have let all alone. Let us then hear it. Why,

We have brought never a positive scripture that says, "There is no such place as purgatory;" and a huge outcry is on such occasions

taken up against our negative way of arguing against a doctrine that they positively profess.*

ANSWER 1. This old father had said something, if he had told us [that] they had positively proved it. But positive profession without proof, methinks, should not privilege any one from another's as positive negation, if I may so phrase it. And truly on their part it lies to have given us positive and express scripture for purgatory, that would impose it on us as a positive article of faith to be believed on pain of damnation; which how they have quitted themselves in, may be observed in the obscure and impertinent allegations before instanced in.

2. It seems abundantly sufficient for a suspension of faith, (which is our case,) that we see, and are able to show, that there is no foundation for it; which is that I think he calls our "negative way of arguing."

3. It seems absurd to provoke to positive express scripture against every particular chimera that may come into men's heads a thousand years after the scriptures were written; for so, if any man should assert, (especially if many should agree to it,) that Mahomet is a true prophet, or that the moon was a mill-stone, or whatever else can be supposed more unlikely, I am bound to subscribe to it, except I can bring particular, positive, express scripture against it. It has always been the prudence of lawgivers to direct their particular laws against faults in being, lest in forbidding all that might be, they might teach some that never else would have been: God has walked in the same wisdom [which] he infused into them; and it has sufficed him particularly to condemn what was particularly practised against faith and good manners, leaving general rules for the trial of after-emergencies. Yet,

4. In the scriptures [which] we have quoted, there is that positively asserted that gives us good foundation positively to conclude that there is no such place as purgatory. For if Christ has fully satisfied, and God fully pardoned, and given hopes to his people, that on their departure hence they shall be immediately glorified, (all which has been fully by positive scriptures proved,) we may positively conclude, that other satisfactions are not required, the saints shall not be so severely punished, nor their expectations at that rate delayed, as in the doctrine of purgatory is asserted. And thus we have done with our Doctor Positive.

EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

VI. *What evil consequences are there of this doctrine of purgatory, where it is received, and whereon it should not be received?*

I have fore-hinted some, which I shall briefly recapitulate, and add a few others.

1. Hereby the freeness of God's grace is disparaged, and he is represented a hard master to them that fear him, contrary to the notion [which] he has every where given them of himself, and his design of insinuating into the good opinion of them, as one mainly tender over them. God would make them believe, that "he was afflicted in all their afflictions," (Isai. lxiii. 9,) and angry with them that laid a hard blow, or continued a heavy hand, upon them, though it was but for seventy years; (Zech. i. 15;) but in this doctrine of purgatory he is represented as of a far

* E. W. "Protestants without Principles," p. 459.

other temper ; and that when men have done their worst with them, they shall not escape so, but he will have his pennyworths out of them ; and a thousand years' exquisite torments shall not suffice some of them ; which is to dash the good opinion [which] his saints, on his Son's report, had conceived of him.

2. Hereby the fulness of Christ's satisfaction is denied, and faith in him much discouraged. . What confidence indeed can be put in him, if he should leave us thus in the lurch, and force us to seek other friends, when we have most need of him ?

3. Hereby the horrid nature of sin is lessened, in that any thing that we can suffer in a little time, or our friends can do over and above their own duty, is reputed a just satisfaction for it, or any the least remainders of it.

4. Hereon human works and helps are over-advanced, and many a piece of superstition and will-worship introduced, and a pack of deceitful priests diverted from their proper work with the living, and vainly occupied about the dead, that have "no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." (Eccles. ix. 6.)

5. Hence bad men are less careful to prepare for death, since a great part of their business may be done by other hands when they are gone.

6. Hereon good men are even afraid to die ; for it seems a terrible thing to enter into this purgatory, where especially their coming out depends so much on man's sincerity, whom it is hard to trust when one is gone, and his reward is come. They that know the difficulty of believing in Christ, must needs be more straitened to place any comfortable confidence in a priest's prayers and Masses, that, if he be faithful while he live, lives not for ever to make intercession or make up his satisfaction for him.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

From all which I conclude,

That the doctrine of purgatory and prayers for the dead, as if thereby their afflicted, tormented souls could be relieved, is a corruption of lamentable consequence to the church, and a pernicious snare to souls.

USE.

But since there is no such thing as a purgatory after this life,

1. Let us purge and prepare ourselves as much as we can in this life, making use of Christ's blood, Spirit, and word to that purpose, and freely submitting to and complying with present afflictions in their design this way ; considering that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) Let the fire of holy zeal burn in your breasts, since the fire of an after-purgatory is not likely to kindle on your persons.

2. Let this cut off all vain hopes after death from them that have neglected salvation-work in life ; considering that there is no relief for them hereafter, but to hell God will immediately send them : "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

(Psalm ix. 17.) "Consider this, ye that forget God," and unpreparedly expose yourselves to his hand; for he will "tear you in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver you;" (Psalm l. 22;) or, yet further to speak to you in the Psalmist's words: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Psalm xlix. 6—8.)

3. Let this chase away needless fears from good people at the point of death; for when they have drunk that cup, they shall taste no more bitter to all eternity; sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

4. Let what has been said commend the Protestant doctrine (in denying purgatory) as an useful, wholesome doctrine while we live, and alike comfortable to them that have lived well, and learned to rely on Christ, when they come to die.

VII. Lastly. *Let me give the genuine sense of this place, and improve it*; and this will force a more particular respect to the context.

1. The "builders" are generally understood, in a way of eminency at least, of the doctors of the church; though I will not contend, if any shall comprehend also their disciples that shall build their faith upon the doctrine which they have delivered.

2. The foundation that is built on by both builders is supposed the same,—“the Lord Jesus Christ;” such as own him are, as to the main, Christian. They on all hands are yielded to broach “damnable doctrines” indeed, that “deny the Lord that bought them.” (2 Peter ii. 1.)

3. As to the materials that are superstructed on this foundation, though some of our adversaries are contentious about them, and will, against all sense, suppose by “gold and silver” to be meant *good works*, and by “hay and stubble,” *venial sins*, which is a perversion of the very scope of the text; yet hereabout we are pretty generally agreed, that, at least properly and firstly, the apostle speaks of doctrines, and by “gold, silver, and precious stones,” are meant a superstructure suitable to and worthy of the foundation,—“like precious faith,” (2 Peter i. 1.) that in the whole building there may be a proportion; and by “wood, hay, and stubble,” (as A Lapide phrases it,*) we understand *doctrina incerta, frivola, pomposa, phalerata, curiosa, inutilis*, “an uncertain, frivolous, pompous doctrine, that has more show than substance,” that is of a base, earthy, rotten, mouldering, perishing nature, that is a blemish to the foundation, and destroys the uniformity of Christian religion, and makes a mere Nebuchadnezzar’s image of it,—part gold, and part clay, that can never cement or hold long together. And by these last builders, or rather daubers, I understand eminently the Popish doctors. Christ, they seem content, should lie for the foundation; though some will tell them [that] it is but a nominal Christ that they lay there neither; for the stress of their building is laid on other things, while they make use of his name; and we must be beholden to ourselves and I know not what saints for our salvation, though he bears the title of “our Saviour.”

* *In locum.*

Yet grant it, that they make Christ their foundation, what incongruity is there between that and their superstruction! To instance :

Christ is King. (Psalm ii. 6.)—This they pretend to own ;—a golden foundation ; but they must reign ; this in effect they infer ;—a wooden, dirty, dungy superstruction. If you ask wherein they do so ? I answer,

(1.) *In dispensing with Christ's laws.*—Which they do at pleasure.

(2.) *In making new laws, equally obliging conscience under pain of damnation.*—This they have done with that arrogance, that we may find ten of theirs to one of Christ's, as will appear by comparing their voluminous decretals, with his gospels, and his servants' epistles.

(3.) And lastly. *In taking upon them to authorize, as it were, and enforce his laws,* as if they had their binding power not so much from Christ's institution, as the pope's declaration.—Nor in this can they pretend substitution, unless they could show us his commission, walked by his directions, or expressed more subjection. That scripture, in regard of the pope's arrogance, both in respect of Christ and his people, may well be applied (as undoubtedly it belongs) to him, that, "as God, he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessa. ii. 4.)

Again : *Christ is Prophet.*—A good foundation ; but we must ultimately hear and heed the pope ;—a strawy superstruction, and a perfect degrading of Christ by implication. See whether we bring against them a wrongful accusation : "Things are not to be believed because Christ said them, but because the church of Rome avouches them." The very scriptures themselves, and every particular article of faith, according to them, have their credibility, not from any character that Christ has put upon them, or seal that he has set to them ; but as the church votes them, so we must believe of them. This is more notorious than that we should need to bring-in particular authors of theirs. And what is the meaning of this, but, while they give Christ the name, to usurp to themselves the office of instructing and enlightening the world ? It may be no heresy to disbelieve what Christ has said, as was fore-noted in the instance of pope John XXII. ; but he that suspends faith to any thing, or dares think contrary to what the pope, forsooth, and his council have instamped with their authority,—he is an intolerable heretic, and fit only for hell.

Once more : They will not stand with us about *Christ's being Priest,* wherein they seem to own the foundation ; but straight join with him such a fry of their *sacrificuli* ["priestlets"], as if they much doubted his sufficiency. Hence also we are taught by them to multiply sacrifices as well as priests, as if he had not "by that one" [which] he offered "for ever perfected them that believe ;" (Heb. x. 14 ;) we are put on personal satisfactions, directed to others' intercessions, all ways are devised to affront him in this office, while they pretend to own him.

And by what in these particulars has been instanced, is evidenced what it is to rear a strawy superstruction on this golden foundation, wherein the Papists of all men are notoriously guilty.

4. By "the day that shall declare every man's work," the Papists will have meant, as in their translation is read, "the day of the Lord ;" by

which some of them understand the day of the general judgment; though others will admit a more particular judgment, and with good reason: for if good and bad works were not declared till the day of the universal judgment, and the fiery tribulation of that day, the fire of purgatory would go quite out; for there would be no place for that. But it is confessed on all hands, that the generality of Greek copies read only "the day," not "the day of the Lord;" and that it is not *σκεπη η̄ η̄μερα* ["that day"], as that great day is wont to be expressed, but only *η̄ η̄μερα* ["the day"]. Therefore hereby I am inclined to understand some brighter season of the gospel; and called "day," in respect of its light, to distinguish it from the former times, which were a kind of night, wherein those mists had arisen that the light and heat of this day should scatter and chase; according as was foretold, that this "wicked one should be revealed, and that the Lord should consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming;" (2 Thess. ii. 8;) which word, we find, has been regarded, and that "wicked one" and his works (however by the advantage of former darkness he and they were concealed) have begun to be revealed, consumed, and we hope, as the day grows brighter, to see [them] utterly destroyed. For as the day grows in light, we may expect it to increase in heat, [so] that it shall be tormenting, through its violent scorching, to them that for their evil and odious works have always affected darkness and shade. (Rev. xvi. 8, 9.)

5. We are hereby led further into the understanding of "the fire" after mentioned, as a concomitant of this "day," wherein every man's work, that is, words and faith, should be tried, all adulterate works consumed, and such-like workers damaged and greatly endangered. And this fire I understand partly of the word of God, which I find so expressed: "Is not my word like as a fire?" (Jer. xxiii. 29,) and so acting: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones." (Jer. xx. 9.) Partly I understand it of the Spirit, that shall blow up this word, and actuate it unto a greater vigour, making it to burn fiercer, as bellows do enrage our ordinary fire; to which there seems an allusion in Isai. xxx. 33: "The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it:" and in regard of the inflammations that are made in the heart by the Spirit's enforcing the word, it may be called "a spirit of burning." (Isai. iv. 4.) And yet further: I conceive, great and grievous tribulations may be a third ingredient of this fire, and all to make it yet fiercer and fiercer, that it may be effective for the various purposes for which it is sent,—probation, purgation, or consumption, according to the pliability or obstinacy of the objects it meets with. When this fire shall be kindled, and at this rate quickened, true and false doctrine shall be distinguished, the one cleared, and the other condemned; and so each man's works manifested.

This premised, what remains is easily explained.

6. *His* work may be said to "abide," whose doctrine shall be approved, and he shall receive a reward: *present*, in the further satisfaction of mind he shall receive by the Spirit's confirmation and consolation of him, as to what he has preached, professed, or believed; and *future*, in the peculiar glory he may expect, as having found grace to be faithful in all times.

This John exhorts "the elect lady" to look to, that both he and she might "receive a full reward." (2 John 8.)

7. *His works* are said to be "burnt," *that* yields to the burning light of that day, that submits to the convictions of the Spirit, and quits his former errors. So Christ is said to come to "destroy the works of the devil," by the manifestation of himself; (1 John iii. 8;) that is, to burn them, as here, with the brightness of his coming: and so the sons of Levi were purified, by his burning up their dross, and leaving them thereby a pure mass. (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) It is, I am sure, no uncouth notion we give you, when we interpret this burning of their works, by a purification that shall pass upon the builders, in their separation and consumption, through the Spirit's efficacious and clear conviction. But,

8. How is the builder hereon said to "suffer loss?" It may seem his gain.

ANSWER. Yea, and it will prove so, as losses often do; even as the mariner accounts it, when by the loss of his lumber he saves his treasure, by the loss of his goods he saves his ship, by the loss of his ship he saves his life: but, whatever he does gain, loss still he is reckoned to sustain. So in the present case, he that on the Spirit's conviction quits his former errors, gets the knowledge of the truth, gets favour with God; which are far better things than what he has parted with. Yet, inasmuch as these things might have been easier and cheaper had than, it may be, he comes by them, and in that by a kind of force, as in a fire or shipwreck, to save himself he parts with them, they may bear the name of a loss; as Paul reckons the parting with his righteousness, though it was in order to the winning of Christ: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Phil. iii. 7, 8.)

And, in the present case, whenever these refuse-works are burnt, we may reckon up some loss; as, may be, the loss of time, the loss of labour, the loss of reputation, the loss of preferment, the loss of life: so some have found in quitting their corrupt opinions; but the promise is, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. x. 39.)

9. From hence naturally results the interpretation of our text: "But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire;" that is, by yielding to these convictions, and quitting his false opinions; even as when a man's house is on fire, if he leaves his goods, leaps out of the window, and hastes away, he may save his own person, with the loss of the rest; but if he obstinately resist the fire, in zeal to save his substance, he may perish himself. In like manner, if, when this spiritual fire does fall from heaven upon our spiritual hay and stubble, we suffer it to prey thereupon, and content ourselves to escape with our own lives, giving up these idols of our hearts, and inclining ourselves to embrace God's revealed truths, we may save our souls with some little scorching. But if we go about to quench this fire, and suppress its light, with resolution to save this pitiful stuff; we may possibly preserve that, but more than hazard the everlasting burning of our own souls by it: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who

hold the truth in unrighteousness ;” (Rom. i. 18 ;) and “ to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish ” will God repay “ upon every soul of them.” (Rom. ii. 8, 9.)

And this, I suppose, is the genuine meaning of the place.

OBJECTION. But our adversaries will be asking, What pope, what council says so ; by what authority will we enforce their receiving of this sense ?

ANSWER. To which I answer in two particulars :—

1. I note [that] the commentaries of popes and councils, however good they be at it, are very rare things, and come not to every one’s hands. One may guess them choice jewels, that they keep them so close : though, they are a spiteful sort of folks, if they only know the mind of God, that they so rarely apply themselves to open the word of God.

2. I suppose [that] there is authority in the text sufficient to bow our minds to read it with meekness, and without prejudice ; and, being confident of this, I am less solicitous for the authority of the comment. For, in our giving the sense of scripture, we pretend not to have dominion over any one’s faith, that we should come with serjeants and bailiffs to arrest any one’s consent without his due conviction to it ; but it suffices us to propose with fidelity what, on our best search and most serious prayer, seems likeliest to be the mind of God, and “ commend ourselves ” and sense “ to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor. iv. 2.) And he that hath an eye to see, let him see ; but he that will flutter out all the light that is brought to him, because it is not set on a candlestick that likes him, let him lie in darkness, if he affects it ; but let him think of the blackness of darkness that may be reserved for him, as a just punishment of his despite of light. (Jude 6.) This has been thought a meet recompence for such error.*

IMPROVEMENT.

Briefly, then, as I promised, to *improve* this genuine sense,

1. *By way of exposition of Protestants’ charity, wherein Papists much glory.*—Even we, say they, hold that they may be saved. We do ; but observe in what cases.

(1.) *In case of invincible ignorance.*—And thus we hope well of many a devout soul that died in their communion in the night of Popery, and had not means or opportunities to know better. Their walking in all known duty, and repenting even of unknown iniquity, might commend them to God’s infinite mercy ; but still this is only our charity, a reliance on which, except we had better judgments than they think we have, makes not for their safety.

(2.) *In case of their reformation in compliance with after-conviction.*—And thus we have like hope of Turks and Pagans. And this, I am apt to think, is almost generally expected, since the day of gospel-light has begun to dawn ; and much more as it grows brighter and brighter, and its beams dart hotter and hotter upon their consciences. Let the learned of them especially look to it ; for however it go with the simpler sort, that are so of necessity, they will hardly escape, persons and works

* Soc. *De Dyp. et Mundo.*

too ; but if they abide together, now the day of the Lord is begun, and his fire gone forth, they are likely to be burnt up, and perish together. And it is not our charity, nor, may be, God's mercy, that will relieve them, while Christ's merit, in despite of all the convictions of his Spirit, is thus slighted by them.

2. *By way of call to ingenuous Papists, to close with this way that is discovered for their salvation, by quitting their strawy and wooden superstructions, and giving up all their vain inventions to their first conviction.*—I would not have them prevent it, nor delay upon it ; it is dangerous abiding in Babylon when it is day, retaining the works of darkness when it is light ; when you do hear God's call, (and hearken for it,) "Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues ;" (Rev. xviii. 4 ;) or, to apply what was said to Lot : "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain ; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. xix. 17.)

3. *By way of caution to unwary Protestants, that, may be, hold the foundation.*—Look also to the superstruction ; take heed of strange and uncouth opinions ; and when you have imbibed them, be not over-tenacious of them ; but give them up straight to conviction. And stand not on the loss of reputation. The quitting [of] them may be the only means of thy salvation ; for though there may seem no great evil in thy opinion, thy obstinacy in adhering to it, when sufficient light is given to see the folly of it, may in continuance become the sin against the Holy Ghost, that will never be forgiven. (Matt. xii. 31, 32.)

CONCLUSION.

To conclude : I read of "many that had used curious arts, which brought their books together, and burned them before all men : and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." (Acts xix. 19, 20.) A remarkable instance, indeed, of the power of the word,—that scholars should be wrought on to burn their books, their books of curious arts, that got them probably their credit, their books of such a value ! And the truth on it is, to accommodate our present case hereto, men's own notions and fancies are dear to them, when no outward advantage follows them :

*Qui velit ingenio cedere rarus erit ; **

but much more when their interests are twisted with them. Yet, methinks, their souls should be much more precious ; and, for their sakes, I beseech all concerned in the former charge of foolish builders, that they "cast away their idols of silver and of gold, to the bats and to the moles." (Isai. ii. 20.) And I beseech God, in the behalf of Rome, and all that partake with it in its unmeet and unworthy superstructions, though on the common foundation, that, on the warm application of the word, they may separate from their works ; lest, as the fire grows hotter, they be consumed with them. A blessed bonfire it would be, to see their works all burning ; and therein blessed, as it would tend to their souls'

* "A man who will yield in his favourite opinions, is rarely indeed to be met with."—

saving. But O! my heart misgives me. If God's word so far prevail for their conviction, what means that crackling noise [which] I hear, of fire and brimstone, prepared for their destruction? (Rev. xvii. 16; xviii. 8.)

Cease frightening one another with your purgatory-flames, that are but imaginary; and fly [from] the fire of God's wrath, kindled at his jealousy, that is likely to prey upon you unto all eternity.

SERMON XII. (VIII.)

BY THE REV. WILLIAM JENKIN, A. M.

NO SIN IS IN ITS OWN NATURE VENIAL; BUT EVERY SIN IS DEADLY, AND
DESERVES ETERNAL DAMNATION.

NO SIN VENIAL.

The wages of sin is death.—Romans vi. 23.

It was a censure more true than smart, which a late learned pen publicly, in this expression, pronounced against Popery: *Romana religio, in quantum differt a nostrâ, est mera impostura*:* “The now Roman religion, as it differs from ours, is a mere cheat, juggle, or” kind of “religious legerdemain.” And herein the imposture of that religion eminently appears, in that, under the varnish of Christian, most of it seems calculated only for hooking-in of worldly gain, and promoting of secular advantage. What bishop Senhouse (the Cambridge Chrysostom of his time) saith in his sermon upon Acts xix. 28, concerning Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen,—their crying of “Great is the Diana of the Ephesians;” “The shrines of Diana causing their shrieks for Diana, and their great gain by her raising up their great cry for her, showed there was *dolus in idolo*, ‘deceit in their contention for the idol,’”—may as truly be said of the Romish Demetrius, the pope and the Popish priests,—their eager outcry in the defence of the points of Popery; it being not Christ but mammon, not piety but money, not God but gold, that engageth them in their advancing of their doctrines and devotions. As St. Ambrose spake of Benjamin's sack, (Gen. xlv. 12, 13,) *Sacco soluto apparuit argentum*, “When the sack was loosed, the silver appeared;” resolve the most of their theology into that whereof it is constituted, and silver (gain, I mean) will be found to be the chief element of its constitution. Of this their own writers are fittest witnesses, whom I have cited in their own words for [the] proving of this my accusation. Æneas Silvius, afterwards pope, informs us, that “the Roman court gives nothing without silver. It sells,” saith he, “the imposition of hands, the gifts of the Holy Ghost; nor is pardon of sin given to any but such as are well-moneyed.”† A poet of their own

* DR. PRIDEAUX'S *Lectiones*.

† *Nihil est quod absque argento Romana curia dedat. Ipsa manuum impositio et Spiritus Sancti dona venduntur: nec peccatorum venia nisi nummatis impenditur.*—ÆNEAS SILVIUS, *Epist. lvi.*